

In the reports of the Trustees, will be found a history of the growth of the institution, from the beginning, and brief statements of the general result attained under the administration of its affairs, and their own conclusions based upon these facts. The reports of the Superintendent to the Trustees, are designed to give an account of the general system of management adopted in the institution and also to furnish more detailed accounts of the results obtained.

It is to be remembered that these reports have been prepared in accordance with a state law, for the information of legislatures, composed, each year, mainly of new members and who are, in a measure, ignorant of the design and object, in view of which the institution has been established. Under such circumstances a general resemblance in the several reports, and also, some degree of repetition, has been unavoidable.

They have been printed, also, quite hastily, by the printer to the legislature and often without any opportunity for the writers to correct the proof, so that they abound in typographical errors.

Institutions receiving this volume, will confer a favor on the undersigned, by sending in return a full series of their reports.

EIGHTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
NEW-YORK ASYLUM
FOR
IDIOTS.

To the Legislature of the State of New-York for 1859.

ALBANY:
CHARLES VAN BENTHUYSEN, PRINTER.
1859.

TRUSTEES.

JAMES H. TITUS,
HENRY H. POHLMAN,
ALLEN MUNROE,

FRANKLIN TOWNSEND,
HAMILTON WHITE,
LYMAN CLARY,

HIRAM PUTNAM.

Ex-officio Trustees.

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G. J. TUCKER,

R. CAMPBELL,
SANFORD E. CHURCH.

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HENRY N. POHLMAN.

Secretary.

ALLEN MUNROE.

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STATE OF NEW YORK.

No. 115.

IN ASSEMBLY, MAR. 3, 1859.

EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Trustees of the New York Asylum for Idiots.

To the Legislature of the State of New York:

The subscribers, trustees of the Asylum for Idiots, as required by law, respectfully submit the following

REPORT:

The annual report to the board of its treasurer, herewith annexed, exhibits in general items the entire cash receipts and payments of the fiscal year of the institution ending September 30th, 1858. The total of receipts has been \$26,175.10; the total of expenditures, payments on warrants of the executive committee, has been \$26,262.26, showing a balance due the treasurer of \$87.14. The particular items of this total of expenditures are as follows:

This schedule of expenditures, it will be remembered, exhibits not only the actual expenses of the year, but also includes the payment of the deficiencies of previous years provided for by the Legislature of 1858, by a special appropriation of \$7,500; and of which the sum of \$3,958.55 was on account of building, grounds, and new laundry.

Buildings and grounds, new laundry, &c.,-----	\$3,958 55
Household supplies of all kinds,-----	7,469 85
Farm, garden, stable stock, hay, oats, farm labor, &c.,	377 93
Furniture and furnishing articles,-----	1,385 69
Fuel, coal and wood,-----	1,479 37
Gas bills,-----	478 66
Rent,-----	467 70
Salaries of officers and teachers,-----	4,320 33
Wages of attendants and servants,-----	3,620 97

Repairs,.....	33 75
Traveling expenses of trustees and superintendent, ..	85 07
Clothing,	1,504 89
Water works Co.,	100 00
Insurance,.....	210 00
Printing,	50 63
Taxes on farm leased,.....	35 19
Freight, express and telegraph,.....	14 18
Postage,.....	43 74
Platform scales,	230 00
School furniture and apparatus,	75 51
Books and stationery,.....	57 22
Advertising,	21 54
Expenses of children home,.....	12 15
Trees and shrubs,.....	145 21
Medical services and dentist's bill,	50 00
Bookkeeper,	8 00
Barber,	16 50
Sundries paid by steward,.....	9 63
	<hr/>
	\$26,262 26
	<hr/> <hr/>

The aggregate of payments, on account of the actual expenses of the last year, has been

For articles of consumption, household supplies, farm expenses, &c.,.....	\$10,414 98
Salaries and wages,	7,422 46
	<hr/>
Total,.....	\$17,837 44
	<hr/> <hr/>

There were outstanding claims against the Asylum on the 30th of September last, to the amount of \$4,894.39.

There were at the same time cash assets, in the form of sums due from counties and individuals for board and clothing of pupils, and also household supplies of various kinds on hand, so nearly to balance this indebtedness, as to supersede the necessity of calling upon the Legislature for any deficiencies. We shall, therefore, need only an appropriation for the current expenses of the next year.

The average number of pupils in the Asylum for the last year has been 110. This number, taken as a divisor of the total expenses of the year, together with the excess of indebtedness over assets on the 30th of Sept. last, (\$11,137.72) and which may

be reckoned in the expense account of that year, gives a total of \$18,975.16, and makes a per capita charge of \$172.50. From this charge, deducting \$20 for clothing paid by counties, for certain State pupils, as provided by law, and it will be seen that the annual expense to the State, for each pupil, will not exceed the estimate made in the report of the board to the last Legislature.

As the experience of the last year has not led them to change their views of the cost of maintenance of the pupils, it may be well enough to repeat what was then said:

“ In this connection the trustees will state as their conviction, based on past experience and upon the special results of each successive fiscal year, that it will be necessary to have \$160 appropriated by the Legislature for the annual support of each pupil in the institution, when the number shall be one hundred and upward; for a reduced number an increased per capita appropriation would be needed.”

During the past year—that is, from Sept. 30th, 1857, to Sept. 30th, 1858, there were twenty-two new pupils received. Of former pupils reported in the Asylum, sixteen were removed by their parents or friends, or dismissed, in accordance with the by-laws. Four have died. The largest number in the Asylum, at any time during that period, was 112. At no time, except the annual vacation, was there less than 105.

The trustees consider that the time has now arrived when the number of pupils should be increased to the full capacity of the building, which is estimated to be sufficient for 150 pupils.

Urgent applications are continually made from all sections of the State. These are refused admission, solely because the appropriations heretofore made by the Legislature for the annual support of the institution, would not cover the additional expense occasioned by any increase of pupils. It is believed that the increased expense incident to such an addition of pupils, as is now suggested, will not be in the ratio of the number. As the salaries and wages of officers and teachers, and servants, and the general expenses of the Asylum, as fuel, lights, &c., would not be materially increased, there would be only the necessity for a small amount of additional furniture, and the mere cost of provisions for the increased number. An increase of the annual appropriation to \$18,000 would enable the trustees to provide for twenty-five additional pupils; or, in other words, 120 State pupils.

There are belonging to the Asylum eighteen acres of excellent land, the purchase money for which was mainly contributed by

the citizens of Syracuse. In addition to this, we have had a lease of thirty-five acres of land adjoining. This amount of land, together, makes a farm, the cultivation of which the trustees regard of great advantage to the institution. It has been well cultivated, under the direction of the steward, mainly by the larger boys. A gardener, and one man employed for a few months, being the only additional laborers required. Besides the value of its products for domestic use, the opportunity it affords for training the boys to labor, proves an efficient auxiliary in promoting the objects of the institution.

Since the last annual meeting of the board death has removed another of its early members, the late Dr. Fred'k F. Backus, of Rochester. He was an active member of the board for several years; he was always deeply interested in its prosperity; but his relations to this Asylum constitute but a small portion of his claim to our memorial of his services in the cause of the education of idiots. These have an earlier origin than the commencement of our own institution, and a wider influence than its immediate results. He initiated the first legislative action in this country, looking to the amelioration of the condition of idiots. That action ultimated, after an interval of two or three years, (in which he was by no means idle) in the establishment of this institution; and further, to the influence of those early labors of his, in 1846, in this State, can be traced the first movements for a similar end in other States. In a former report will be found a fuller record of his early efforts in this cause.

The annual report of the superintendent to the board, herewith annexed, furnishes such particular information relative to the domestic affairs of the Asylum, and such general remarks concerning its operations, as will serve to direct the Legislature in its consideration of the necessities incident to the enterprise, and the importance attached to the charity committed to the charge of the undersigned, as trustees.

In conclusion, it is respectfully suggested to the Legislature, as was done in the last annual report, that the Superintendent of Public Instruction should be appointed an ex-officio member of the board.

JAMES H. TITUS,
FRANKLIN TOWNSEND,
HENRY H. POHLMAN,
ALLEN MUNROE,
HAMILTON WHITE,
Trustees.

E. D. MORGAN,
R. CAMPBELL,
GIDEON J. TUCKER,
Ex-Officio Trustees.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

To the Trustees of the N. Y. Asylum for Idiots:

Gentlemen—The undersigned would respectfully submit the following annual report as superintendent:

The number of pupils connected with the Asylum, a year since, was 112. During the following winter this number was increased, as was then anticipated; but owing to the fact that all our pupils do not take their vacations at the same period, and also that some are absent, for short periods, oftener than once a year, the largest number at any one time actually in the Asylum was 112.

The smallest number at any time was 105.

The average number in attendance was 110.

Of the pupils of the institution there have been removed or dismissed during the past year 16. There have been four deaths.

There have been admitted or accepted for admission for the present year 20.

This will make our present number for the present year the same as the last.

There has been an exemption from any severe cases of sickness that would seem quite remarkable with so many children of feeble physical organization, to those who do not realize how much regularity in diet, vigorous and daily exercise in the open air, and a free use of water externally, are securities against sickness and death in all classes and under all circumstances.

The four deaths above mentioned, as occurring in the Asylum, do not conflict with this statement.

For one died only two or three weeks after admission, from an acute disease, resulting from exposure, in bringing her to the institution in very inclement weather.

Two were very scrofulous and feeble children from birth, and died as old persons die, because their systems were worn out.

The fourth died suddenly from disease of the heart.

The same officers and teachers that were connected with the institution a year ago, still continue to discharge their duties, to the satisfaction of the superintendent. I owe to the attendants and other employés of the Asylum, a public acknowledgment of our indebtedness to them for the patience and self-control that they have exhibited in their intercourse with the pupils. A spirit of kindness and forbearance towards the children has prevailed in the institution, I can assure the trustees. This has so impressed the parents of the children who have been surrendered to our care, that I am confident no one of them has left a child here, but with the feeling that it was in good hands.

I think that I may also assure the board of trustees, that in no respect has the institution failed to meet the anticipations of its friends, or the public expectations in regard to it.

There has been an improvement in the general health and physical vigor of the pupils. There has been a commensurate intellectual progress in them.

In almost every individual case there has been improvement to a greater or less degree; and, collectively, of them it may be affirmed that they have been elevated in the scale of humanity.

In the present report I do not propose to give descriptions of the improvement made in individual cases, nor to recount at length even the general results obtained in the institution. A knowledge of what has been accomplished in particular cases has been communicated to neighborhoods in all sections of the State, by the return of our pupils to their homes, at the annual vacations. A knowledge of the general results of our system of management and instruction has been as widely disseminated; and not only the results, but the adaptation of the means employed, to the ends in view, have been witnessed during the last seven years by a large number of visitors from all parts of the State; for the difference between an idiot, (or even a feeble-minded child,) who has been exposed to proper educational influences; (that is, who has been trained and developed; his faculties awakened and his affections cultivated, and his will made capable of originating thought and action,) and one left to the guidance of his instinct and his impulses, will not escape the notice of even a casual observer.

It will be seen by those who examine the matter more carefully, that this difference is constantly widening.

In the one case there is an ever increasing consciousness of his relations to the world, of objects and life, about him, and a grow-

ing appreciation of the responsibilities and duties springing from the relations thus recognized.

In the other case there is an ever-thickening wall of isolation that separates him more and more from everything in the world beside, except from what may minister to a mere animal feeling or appetite.

Nor is the victim of self-absorption the only sufferer from the mental incapacity and the accumulation of repulsive habits which become a second nature. The family, to a great degree, and the neighborhood measurably, are afflicted and annoyed, and perhaps even put in jeopardy by the existence of such a case.

In our former reports we have dwelt upon the capacity for labor and self-support that has been developed in the pupils of the institution. During the past year still more prominence has been given to that feature in the system of instruction pursued in the Asylum.

Resulting from this the labor of the pupils has been more productive than in any previous years. The females have taken a more active part in domestic and household duties; they have been more capable of labor without supervision.

The boys have done still more work proportionately. Beside the ordinary farm and garden work necessary for the production of all the vegetables used by the inmates of the establishment, there has been all the additional labor of converting, what was merely a farm, into the condition of a garden. This has been done mainly by boys, who, when they came to us, were entirely unused to or incapable of any labor. The energy, now thus healthily expended, would have been, in their former condition, misdirected, if awakened at all.

The prominence given to instruction in practical matters is by no means because the incidental economic results are the highest considerations upon which even State charitable institutions are founded. To persons of the limited degree of intelligence, with which we have to deal, such instruction is of the most service. A capacity for any useful occupation, developed in them, contributes more than anything else to the after comfort and happiness of themselves, and of all interested in them; but no one should lose sight of the fact that institutions like ours, or for a kindred purpose, are charitable institutions. No one should forget that they are to be endowed and sustained by the State, because it is the highest function of a truly civilized and republi-

can state to provide for the necessities of its weakest or most unfortunate subjects.

I will again call your attention to the fact that there is yet room in this institution for some thirty or forty more pupils; that there are many suitable subjects for admission in all parts of the State, whose friends would gladly avail themselves of its advantages; that the expense of the annual maintenance of the institution would be but slightly increased by filling it to its entire capacity. I would also further remind you, that provision is now made by the State for the education of every deaf mute or blind person within its limits, without restriction as to number.

May we not claim for the idiots of the State privileges of education as widely extended as are now granted to the other classes just mentioned?

Again commending the interests of this class to the trustees, and through them to the Legislature, I would respectfully submit this report.

H. B. WILBUR, *Sup't.*

TREASURER'S ACCOUNT.

N. Y. Asylum for Idiots, in account with Hamilton White, Treasurer.

Dr.

1857.

Oct.	1.	To balance on hand in treasury,-----	\$8 03
	9.	To cash from State Treasurer,-----	3,750 00

1858.

Jan.	5.	do	do	-----	3,750 00
Feb.	4.	do	do	-----	2,500 00
	23.	do	do	-----	3,000 00
May	1.	do	do	-----	7,500 00
Feb.	...	To cash from county treasurers for clothing,			720 00
July	6.	To cash from State Treasurer,-----			2,000 00
		To cash from individuals for board, instruc- tion and clothing of paying pupils,----			2,947 07

\$26,175 10

Overdraft,-----

87 16

\$26,262 26

Cr.

By cash paid on warrants of executive committee			
on account of furniture,-----			\$1,385 69
do building and laundry,-----			3,958 55
do supplies and sundries,-----			11,471 83
do salaries of officers and teachers,---			4,320 33
do wages of attendants and servants,--			3,620 97
do clothing, -----			1,504 89
			\$26,262 26

The above amounts have all been drawn out of the treasury on warrants of the executive committee, and the various items will appear in their report.

APPENDIX A.

Extract from the Minutes of the Board.

"Whereas, in the providence of God, since the last meeting of this board, it has been deprived of one of its most worthy members, in the death of Frederick F. Backus, M.D.; and, whereas, he was foremost in directing public attention to the neglected condition of idiots, as a class the most unfortunate of mankind, and the first in this country to ask legislative aid for their relief and improvement; now, therefore, with pious submission to the sad bereavement we have experienced, be it

1st. *Resolved*, That we cherish with affection and reverence the memory of Frederick F. Backus, who was, as a physician, justly eminent; as a legislator, sagacious and conscientious; as a philanthropist, discreet and intelligent; as a citizen, prominent without ambition, and active without selfishness; as a christian, firm in faith and consistent in conduct.

2d. *Resolved*, That in the history of the improvement of the condition of idiots, the name of Frederick F. Backus should ever be prominent for the early and active part he took in this country, by legislative action, to awaken public attention and sympathy in behalf of that branch of philanthropic effort.

3d. *Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted to the family of our deceased associate, as a testimony of our appreciation of his worth and evidence of our sympathy with them in their affliction."

APPENDIX B.

The following extracts from the by-laws of the Asylum will show its aims, and the condition upon which pupils are received:

“The design and object of the Asylum, as established by the action of the Legislature, are not of a custodial character, but to furnish the means of education to that portion of the youth of the State, not provided for in any of its other educational institutions. Those only will, therefore, be received into the Asylum who are of a proper school-attending age, and for such periods of time as shall in the estimation of the board of trustees, suffice to impart all the education practicable in each particular case, and in conformity with the regulations hereinafter specified.

“Children between the ages of seven and fourteen who are idiotic, or so deficient in intelligence as to be incapable of being educated at any ordinary school, and who are *not epileptic, insane or greatly deformed*, may be admitted by the superintendent, with the advice and counsel of the executive committee. Applications in behalf of others shall be referred to the action of the board of trustees.

“The parents or next friends of those in whose behalf applications are made for admission as pupils, shall make answer in writing to such questions as the superintendent may prescribe.

“They shall, moreover, if of sufficient ability, engage to pay such reasonable sums for the education and support of the pupils, and to furnish them with such proper clothing while in the institution as shall be stipulated by the superintendent, and they shall in all cases be bound to receive them back, when required, free of expense to the Asylum.

“The State pupils in the Asylum will be selected in equal numbers, as far as may be, from each judicial district, from those whose parents or guardians are unable to provide for their support therein.

“The State pupils will be expected to come to the Asylum, provided with a supply of neat and substantial clothing adequate for the first six months; after which period, their clothing will be

furnished by the Asylum at the expense of the respective counties of which they are residents, as in the case of the deaf and dumb, and the blind asylums of the State. A bond will be required in all cases to ensure the removal of the pupil, when required by the superintendent, free of expense to the institution.

“All pupils will be received upon trial for one month, at the end of which time, a report upon the case will be made to the parents or parties sending them.

“The education furnished by the institution will include not only the simpler elements of instruction usually taught in common schools, where that is practicable, but will embrace a course of training in the practical matters of every day life; the cultivation of habits of decency, propriety, self-management, and self-reliance, and the development and enlargement of a capacity for useful occupation.

“There shall be a vacation during the whole month of August, unless otherwise directed by the board, at which period all pupils must be removed from the Asylum by the parents or guardians, if required by the superintendent.”

Applications for admission to the Asylum must be made to the superintendent.

H. B. WILBUR, M. D.

Syracuse, N. Y.